REAL RUSSIA

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which is foreign, a new and expanding working class whose rights their ruler is not only ready but eager to adjust: Finns with a special interest, Poles with their special aspirations, Jews who are the natural enemies of the muzhiks, or peasants. How a national revolution could arise under such conditions no one can see.

None the less, we are hearing much nowadays about the Revolutionary Party, its Executive Committee, its plans, its overflowing treasury, and all the rose-colored details of a zealous propaganda. And these statements are taken seriously everywhere except in Russia. The intelligent Russian simply shrugs his shoulders and says: "Who are they? The Terrorists we know, but there are not a thousand of them all told. The working-men we know; but they are like the working-men of any other country, and we want, as a national policy, all the working-men we can get; and shall treat them as well if not better than any other country in order to get them. There are certain hardships incidental to the war and the popular agitation which always attend an unsuccessful war; but the war over, the working-men satisfied, who are the real serious Revolutionists, where are they, and what do they want that we are not trying our very best to give them?"

And this is perfectly true. No better proof could be offered than the proposed new press law. Russia probably will have a free press, with the English libel law having the German lese-majesty provision superadded. The wild claimants for a free press are going to have what they desire. It is a step in advance, and an extremely clever one on the part of the Government. Every man will be free to speak and write, and will be held responsible for all he says by a justice swift and sure.

On that fateful January 22 when men and women, honest workers with an honest intent, fell on their knees on the cobblestones beside the Winter Palace and begged the Cossacks to spare them, they spoke a language which the Cossacks did not understand. The pantomime of terror was read easily; but the words fell on the ears of an alien soldiery, of a different race, born thousands of miles away. And the Cossacks who fired were not French troops firing upon French people, but the men of a captive and subject race firing upon their captors. It may well be understood therefore that among the troops there was little danger of mutiny through sympathy, no likelihood whatever of a trigger-finger paralyzed by fraternal leanings. A Polish regiment keeps order among the Finns; a Finnish regiment guards the streets of Moscow; the conquered, naturally hostile races, are played off, one against the other, by the military system.

No bond of sympathy ever exists between the troops and the people of the cities in which they are stationed, and the possibility of disaffection, or at least of the fraternity of disaffection, thus is minimized to the last degree. And, as all the world has learned lately, the Russian soldier is a fine soldier. He is better paid, better fed, better clothed, better housed, better situated in all respects, than he was before he entered the army or will be after he leaves it. The corruption of individuals, army officers and police officers, through money, is always a possible contingency, but to thus corrupt the Russian army would take all the wealth of all the Rothschilds; and the disaffection of it through a national revolutionary principle may be set aside as a propagandist's idle dream.

The same is true of the police, with its immense and ingenious organization. In Russia to-day no citizen can buy a pistol or a cartridge without the knowledge and consent of the police. Every man's birth, daily life and daily conversation are under immediate and constant supervision. Every Russian carries his little passport-book, in which is recorded every journey he makes, which journey must be approved by the police. Every door of every building in every Russian city has its concierge, or doorkeeper, who must report immediately the arrival of any person. No man may sleep a single night in any Russian house without being the subject of police record, and every person who calls upon him must be reported as well.

This concierge system, similar to that of France, is the most powerful aid to the police that ever has been devised. It gives the most perfect supervision over every person who has money enough to buy a bed at night. Outside of these lie the vagabonds. There are twenty thousand of these vagabonds, or "Rats," in St. Petersburg—"tramps" we should call them, always a fruitful breeding-ground for crime. The Countess Tolstoi—no relation of the eminent writer—told me that she once was amazed and horrified to find that her own concierge was sheltering some sixty of these vagabonds in the basement of her palace, the basement being a portion of the building which, as in Italy, the family never enter. The concierge was exacting ten cents apiece from his lodgers, and feeding them with scraps from the family table; and but for a smallpox patient among them the fact never would have been known. But even these vagabonds are looked after by the police with the utmost care. Perhaps one in every ten of them is a police spy, drawing a small stipend from the Government. They are as ragged, as disreputable, as their fellows, but so vigilant and active that nothing happens underground that is not known. It is perfectly true that in Russia even the walls have ears.

That the peasantry has revolted in certain places is the natural result not of progressive or of revolutionary ideas, but of the withdrawal of troops, of privations and pressures incidental to their lowly condition. When the cat is away the mice will play. But these mice are the most superstitious people in Europe, and can be controlled and held in check only by two forces: their own ignorance and incapacity to better their condition, and the Church. The Czar is the head of the Church, and shooting a hundred times at a hundred mobs in St. Petersburg would not affect the superstitious awe in which he is held by a nation of peasants. But the Church is the great governmental factor in dealing with the peasantry; this is why it is relied upon by the Government, and this is why it is hated by the radicals. Were the Czar less devout than he is personally, were he infidel at heart and statesman to the core, he would lean no less heavily upon Pobiedonostseff the Procurator of the Holy Synod, and incline no less to the policy which the latter has pronounced. It is the only possible policy.

The education of the peasantry of course means the end of monarchy. The divine right of kings is a principle of government which has done its part in social evolution, but has had its day. But the development of an intelligent peasantry in Russia is the work of at least a century. And were any form of representative government which truly represented the people possible in Russia to-day, it would be a parliament entirely under the control of the Church, a popular election which would as little represent the people as does that of Spain. The unthinking class is too great; the thinkers are too few, too impractical and too irresponsible. To-day and for many years to come the only force that can maintain the Russia of to-day as the Russia of to-morrow is the powerful, uncurbed hand of an Autocrat, whichever of the Romanoffs he may happen to be.

PERENNIAL YOUTH

SPEAKING of perennial youthfulness, a subject familiar to the many acquaintances of Edward Everett Hale, a friend of the aged clergyman said:

"I had the honor of having Dr. Hale spend his eightieth birth anniversary at my home. I accompanied him to the house, and it just happened that we boarded a car that was pretty well filled up. As we entered the car a young man rose and offered his seat to Dr. Hale. As he took the proffered seat, he remarked:

"'Thank you, I'll do as much for you, young man, when you are eighty years old.'"